Welcome to Qatar e-Guide

Oryx International School

مدرسة اوريكس العالمية

ORYX

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

The afternoon camel parade on the Amiri Diwan lawns

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Welcome to Qatar

Qatar brings together old world hospitality with cosmopolitan sophistication

Qatar has been an independent sovereign state since 1971. It is one of the six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), with the others being Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Oman and Bahrain.

Qatar is a peninsular country whose terrain comprises of arid desert and a long Arabian Gulf shoreline of beaches and dunes. Its capital, Doha is located on the coast and is known for its futuristic skyscrapers and other ultramodern architecture, which sits on the city's corniche waterfront promenade.

Fairmont Doha - 5 stars luxury hotel

Al Bidda Park Doha

Qatar at Glance

Official language

Arabic is the official language in Qatar, but due to a large expatriate population, English is also widely spoken.

Religion

Islam is the official religion of the country, and Sharia Law (Islamic Law) is a main source of its legislations.

Climate

Qatar has a moderate desert climate with long hot summers, short mild winters and little rain. Summer in Doha is usually quite harsh with temperatures rising up to **50'C**. Winters are much cooler and the nights can get a little chilly.

Currency

The official currency is the Qatari Riyal (QAR), which is divided into 100 dirhams. The exchange parity has been set at the fixed rate of USD 1 = QAR 3.64.

Al Mana Tower, Doha

Practical Information

Local time	3 hours + GMT
Electrical	220 - 240 Volts. Primarily British BS-1363 and Indian-style sockets.
Communications	The country code for Qatar is **+974**. Telecom providers are Ooredoo, which provides mobile, wireless, wireline, and content services and Vodafone, which offers prepaid and post-paid mobile and internet services.
Work hours	*Government offices*: 07:00 to 13:00 *Private/retail establishments:* 08:00 to 12:00, and 16:00 to 20:00. Also increasingly 08:00 to 16:00 and 09:00 to 17:00.
Major towns	**Doha**, Al Wakrah, Al Khor, Dukhan, Al Shamal, Mesaieed, Ras Lafan.

National Flag

The Qatari flag & National Dress

Qatari national men wear a thobe, a long white shirt over loose trousers. They also wear a loose headdress, called a ghutra, in white or red and white cloth, held on with a black rope known as the agal.

Qatari national women cover their head with a black headdress called a shayla, and their body with a long black dress called an abaya. Some women also cover their face with a black niqab, leaving only their eyes uncovered.

- The white colour reflects the internationally recognised symbol of peace.
- The maroon colour symbolises the bloodshed during the several wars Qatar has undergone, particularly in the second half of the 19th century.
- The nine-point serrated line indicates that Qatar is the 9thmember of the “reconciled Emirates” following the Qatari-British treaty in 1916.

Cities & National Celebrations

Major cities Doha, Al Wakrah, Al Khor, Dukhan, Al Shamal, Mesaieed, Ras Lafan and others

Qatar National Day is celebrated on 18 December every year, in commemoration of Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammad Bin Thani, the founder of the State of Qatar.

- **National Day:** 18 December
- **Eid Al-Fitr Holiday:** Date changes every year
- **Eid Al-Adha Holiday:** Date changes every year
- **Qatar National Sport Day:** The second Tuesday of February

Fireworks night at The Torch Doha Hotel

The Holy Month of Ramadan

Fireworks night at The Torch Doha Hotel

Ramadan in Qatar is a unique time for both Muslims and non-Muslims, and you will find that the usual patterns of work and leisure have completely changed. Your first Ramadan in Qatar will be a time of excitement, no doubt, and as a new expat, you will surely have a few practical questions on how to tackle the sudden change in routine.

All the rules on culture and etiquette in Qatar should be even more carefully observed during the Holy Month of Ramadan when Muslims around the world fast from dawn until sunset for 29 or 30 days, depending on when the crescent moon is sighted. It is a month of increased prayer, charity, reflection and renewal of friendships for the Muslim community.

There will be lots of ways to enjoy your first Ramadan in Qatar. Most activities are family-friendly, and special events are held for children. On the 14th night of Ramadan, Qatari children take part in the tradition of Garangao by dressing up in traditional clothing and going out into the local neighbourhood to sing the Garangao song and collect sweets and nuts from neighbours.

As an expat, you are sure to be caught up in the spirit of Ramadan, but it is also a very solemn time and being culturally sensitive is important. Here are a few extra do's and don'ts to remember:

Working hours

08:00 to 13:00
or
09:00 to 14:00

The timings for government departments that serve the public change for the entire month. Private sector employees usually work six hours per day, as per Qatar Labour Law.

Shopping hours

Shops, banks, and mall hours will change during Ramadan, so it's advisable to check before heading out of the house. Generally, malls will remain open late at night.

Do's

- Greet Muslim colleagues and friends with 'Ramadan Kareem'
- Everyone in Doha, including non-Muslims, observe a public fast.
- Be careful on the roads, as many people will be rushing to prayers or Iftar meals.
- Be careful to dress more conservatively during Ramadan.

Don't

- Eat, drink, smoke or chew gum in public during the hours of fasting.
- Wear tight-fitting clothes or expose your legs and shoulders.
- Play loud music in your car or at home, which is considered a sign of disrespect.

Qatar’s vision

Qatar is focusing on the growth and development of its people, aiming for a high standard of living through healthcare, education, and leadership in sustainable areas. By 2030, development in both public and private sectors will be guided by four key principles.

Human development:
The development and promotion of education are among the things that create a sustainable and prosperous society.

Social development:
The development of a just and caring society is capable of playing a key role in establishing global partnerships.

Economic development:
The development of a diversified economic base to secure and maintain a high standard of living in the future.

EXPO 2023 Doha

Education in Qatar

Oryx International School

Oryx International School provides a nurturing, community-based environment for the children of Qatar Airways and approved subsidiaries employees. Managed by Orbital Education, the school offers the British Curriculum from Foundation Stage 1 to Year 13 (aged 3 to 18). Our highly experienced team invest the time to get to know each child as an individual, enabling them to grow and develop to reach their potential.

The campus, located in Mesaimeer, provides state-of-the-art facilities for all academic programmes, including Science, Technology, Mathematics, Sports, and the Arts. For more details, please visit www.oryxschool.qa or contact our admissions team at *admissions@oryxschool.qa* or call **+974 4036 0085.**

Other school in Qatar

There are also many privately managed independent nurseries, primary and high schools, and universities in Qatar.
The links below will guide you to a comprehensive list of all schools for children of various nationalities that offer different international curriculums. They include:

- https://nurseriesinqatar.qa/
- https://www.edu.gov.qa/en/Content/Listofprivateschools
- https://www.edarabia.com/schools/qatar/

Qatar Foundation and Education City

Qatar Foundation brings world-class education, work experience and career opportunities to Qatar, enabling people of all ages to contribute to the country's future. Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser is the driving force behind the foundation and construction of Education City.
Located on the outskirts of Doha, the capital of Qatar, Education City covers 14 square kilometres and houses educational facilities from school age to research level and branch campuses of some of the world's universities.

More information can be found at qf.org.qa/education.

Lusail International Circuit Doha

Art & Culture

Qatar is a sports-loving nation. In addition to traditional sports such as falconry, camel racing, horse racing, and traditional boat racing, which many Qataris avidly pursue, modern sports such as football, tennis, basketball, handball, volleyball, cricket, and swimming are also popular.

Annual sporting events held in Doha include: ATP Tennis Tournament, Qatar Masters Golf Tournament, Moto GP Racing World Championships, Equestrian Global Champions Tour and WTA Tour Tennis Championships.

The State of Qatar is fast becoming a cultural destination in its own right. It aims to be known for world-class exhibitions and for its vibrant arts community. Doha has a number of wonderful museums, which are sponsored by Qatar Museums, where you will find an astonishing collection of European and regional art.

Qatar celebrates various communities by holding festivals and cultural events throughout the year. The Katara cultural village is home to many music and heritage events. Qatar Museums also holds an annual “Year of Culture,” whereby a specific culture is celebrated throughout the year, marking the joint connections between Qatar and countries such as Germany, China, Japan, the United Kingdom, Turkey, and others.

For more information visit:

Qatar Museums at qm.org.qa.

Villaggio mall Qatar

Shopping

There are many shopping options from small supermarkets and hypermarkets that are open all day and late at night for essentials to big air-conditioned malls, which offer a range of luxury goods and products. Malls in Qatar are usually open from 10:00 to 22:00, Saturday to Thursday. Most will be closed on Friday mornings but will open later in the day.

The Landmark Mall
Al Shamal Road
Gharaffa, Doha, Qatar Tel: 4487 5222 landmarkdoha.com

The Mall
D Ring Road, Shopping Complex
Doha, Qatar Tel: 4467 8888 themalldoha.com

Hyatt Plaza
Al Waab street
Al Aziziyah, Doha, Qatar Tel: 4499 9666 hyattplaza.com

The Mall of Qatar
Al Rayyan
Doha, Qatar Tel: 4034 6000 mallofqatar.com

Villaggio
Al Waab Street Doha
Al Aziziyah, Doha, Qatar Tel: 4413 5222 villaggioqatar.com

City Centre Mall
Al Dafna, Doha, Qatar Tel: 4493 3355 citycentredoha.com

Qatar Dune Bashing

Getting around Qatar

It is relatively easy to get around in Qatar. Mowasalat, the transport company in Qatar, offers a variety of land transport services and solutions in and around Qatar including airport taxi, standard taxi, VIP limousines, standard limousines, public bus service and private hire bus and coach services. In addition, app-based taxi services such as Uber and others are also available.

Airport taxi

This service offers station wagons that can seat up to six people. Airport taxis operate only to and from Hamad International Airport and are based at the airport taxi stand. They are available round the clock, every day, including public holidays.

Car rental

To hire a car, there are a number of car rental agencies operating in Qatar. You can choose from global car rental brands such as Hertz, Dollar or Thrifty or go with local car rental agencies. If you are in Qatar on a visit visa, you can rent a car in Qatar with the driving licence you currently hold (regardless of the issuing country) for seven days.

Getting a Qatari driving licence

If you are planning on driving in Qatar, you must first visit the Traffic Department of the Ministry of Interior within 15 days of arrival to verify that your internationally issued licence is valid.

You can then drive in Qatar on your home country's licence for one week, after which you must apply for a temporary or Qatar driving licence. International driver's licences are valid for six months.

If you hold a **non-EU or non-UK driving license**, you will need a Qatar Residence Permit and must pass a driving test to obtain a Qatari driving license.

For holders of a UK or EU driving license, you can convert it to a Qatari driving license by presenting the following documents at the Madinat Khalifa Traffic Department:

- Original driving license from your home country
- Passport (original and copies)
- Three passport photos
- Qatari ID Card

Social etiquette in Qatar

Qatar has made it a priority to protect and maintain its heritage and culture. With its foundation as a Muslim country, local traditions and practices still prevail and all residents are expected to be considerate and respectful of the country's culture and religious beliefs. The following tips may be useful.

Dress code

While expats are not bound by the same dress code as nationals, they should still be sensitive to Qatari ideas of decency.

- Women are expected to dress modestly to avoid offending the local community. Skirts, dresses and loose-fitting pants should be knee-length, and tops and shirts should cover the midriff and shoulder areas.
- Men need to keep their wardrobes tasteful. Shorts should be knee-length, and cut-off t-shirts should be avoided.
- Bathing suits and sportswear should only be worn in appropriate venues.

Anti-smoking law

Most public and closed places in Qatar have a no smoking law in force, so care should be taken to observe your surroundings. Qatar Airways too is committed to providing a smoke-free environment to its employees and visitors and follows a non-smoking policy on all of its premises. Employees may not smoke while wearing their company ID or be identifiable as a QR Group Employee (in uniform for example).

Alcohol consumption

Buying and drinking alcohol

- Alcohol is available in licensed restaurants and hotels, which may sell alcohol to adult, non-Muslim customers in restricted areas.
- Residents must show their Qatari ID card to be granted entry to a licensed venue.
- Expatriates living in Qatar can buy alcohol and other products via a permit system. The Qatar Distribution Company (QDC), a subsidiary of Qatar Airways Group, is the only licensed retail distributor in Qatar and has a wide range of beverages that can be purchased by qualifying private individuals.

The following laws apply to alcohol and its consumption:

- It is illegal to import alcohol into the country. All luggage is scanned at the Arrivals Hall of Hamad International Airport.
- It is an offence to drink alcohol in unauthorised public places.
- Those who are caught breaking this law can be deported, fined and even receive prison sentences.
- Alcohol should not be transported within the country.
- For those who have a valid liquor permit, purchases should be taken directly home from the warehouse on collection.
- It is an offence to offer alcohol to Muslims and minors.
- For those who hold a valid liquor permit, it is illegal to donate or give away alcohol to others. It is only meant for personal consumption.

Drinking and drugs:

- Qatar has a zero-tolerance policy on driving under the influence of alcohol, with penalties including imprisonment, fines, or deportation.
- Recreational drugs are illegal in the State of Qatar, and are against Qatar Airways company policy, and should not be consumed by any employee at any time.

More tips

- Always seek permission before taking photographs of people and be cautious about taking photographs in public and government places.
- Doha is a safe, family-friendly place to live, and single women do not need to be concerned when moving around the city at night. However, common sense should always apply.
- Use of obscene language, insulting someone publicly, slander, inappropriate hand gestures and public displays of affection are not acceptable in Qatari culture.
- Certain medications may be illegal in Qatar, so bring your prescription slip and a note from your physician.
- It is prohibited to bring in to Qatar indecent materials of all forms (books/magazines/movies/hard drives or similar) as well as alcohol.

Katara Gardens

Medical & emergency matters

No special vaccinations are required to enter Qatar. Medical care is of high quality, with 24-hour emergency services, public and private clinics and hospitals, and many well-stocked pharmacies in Doha.

Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) is Qatar's main healthcare provider and offers world-class emergency services.
For emergencies, dial 999.

All residents must have a Qatar health card, either to supplement their private insurance or to ensure medical care in the absence of private insurance. This card allows access to medical care at a reduced cost in government clinics and hospitals.

For more information visit:
https://hamad.qa/EN/Patient-Information/How-To-Get-A-Health-Card/Pages/default.aspx

Organisation	Telephone
Police, Civil Defence & Emergency	999
Water and Electricity Emergency	991
Hospital	4439 2111
Hamad Medical Corporations	4439 2222
Telephone Directory	180

Beach St. Regis Doha

Good to know

Safety Tips

Heat Precautions: Exposure to extreme heat during the summer (May to early October) may lead to sunburn or heat strokes due to dehydration. Use sunscreen generously on all exposed skin and stay hydrated when outdoors.

Car Safety: Never leave pets or children inside cars during the day, even if stepping out for just a few minutes, as temperatures inside the car can rise rapidly and lead to suffocation.

Natural Attractions

Purple Island: Located 40 km from Doha in Al Khor, Purple Island is a mangrove forest that features diverse flora and fauna, including fish, shellfish, and birds such as pink flamingos.

The best beaches in Qatar: Fuwairit Beach, Dukhan Beach, Simaisma Beach and Sealine Beach in Mesaieed

Traditional Activities

Camel Races: Every winter, traditional camel races are held in Al Shahaniya. These are not to be missed.

Food & Drinks

Karak Tea: A popular beverage among both local and expatriate residents. Recommended spots for Karak include "Tea Time" and "Chapati & Karak" (Katara Cultural Village).